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Michael and the Mighty Men



Once Upon a Time

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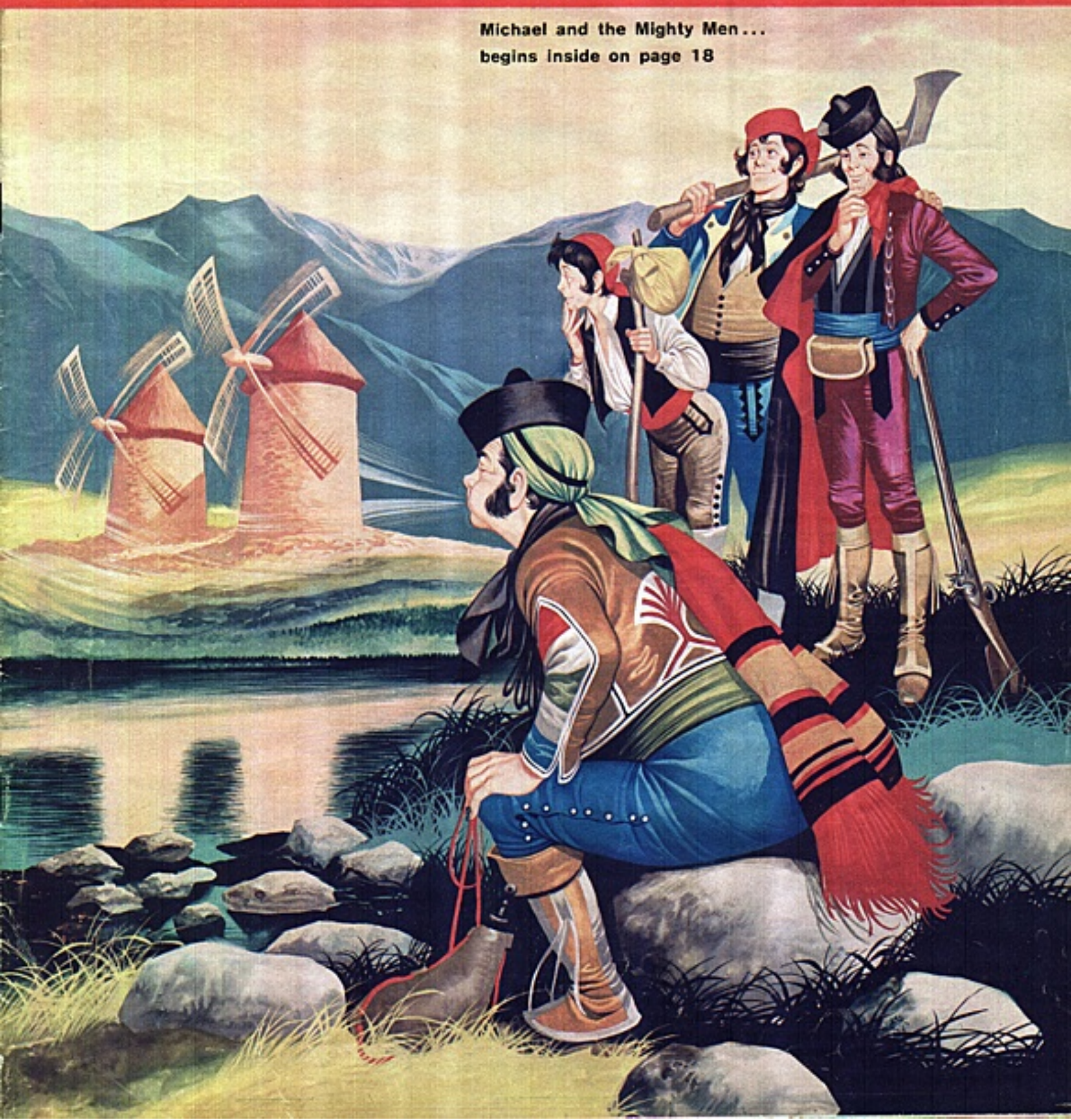
Once Upon a Time

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Michael and the Mighty Men



1. Once upon a time there was a young man named Michael, who was very poor. He did not know what to do to make a living, but he knew that riches would never come to him if he stayed in one place, so one day he bravely set out to explore the world in the hope of making his fortune. For a week or so he wandered about alone and saw nothing exciting until he entered a thick forest.

2. There, he was amazed to see a woodcutter who was chopping down several big trees with just one blow of his axe. Michael had never seen such strength before. "You are a mighty man, my friend," he said. "With strength such as yours you should join me and we will seek good fortune together. What do you say to that?" "I'll willingly have a try," answered the woodsman.



3. So Michael and the woodsman wandered away together, keeping their eyes open for anything to help them in their search for riches. Soon they came upon a hunter, taking aim with his gun.



4. The hunter fired and, wonder of wonders, his shot killed a wasp which was annoying a horse in a field a long way off. It was a marvellous shot and Michael asked the hunter to join them.



5. With two mighty men as his companions, Michael felt sure that good fortune would be theirs sooner or later. They went on their journey together in good spirits and, a little later, they passed close to some windmills. Now the strange part was that the sails of these windmills were spinning around at a terrific speed, although there was not a breath of wind to turn them.



6. "How can such a thing be happening?" asked Michael, and all three of them were greatly puzzled until they walked on and saw a man seated on a rock. He was facing the windmills and blowing gently with his mouth, making the sails whirl round at great speed. "My friend that is marvellous," Michael said. "With such a gift you must join us in our search for riches."



7. The man who could blow with such mighty force was only too willing, so now there were four of them to continue the journey. Next, they met a tall, thin man who had both his ankles tied together with rope. "I am such a fast runner that I dare not have my legs free, or I would be carried miles away," he said.



8. Once again this man was invited to join the party. Farther on still, they met a man who wore his hat pulled down over his right ear. "Why do you wear your hat like that?" asked Michael. "I have to," replied the man. "If I uncovered my right ear, I would send out a stream of air cold enough to freeze the world."

Michael and the Mighty Men



1. Young Michael now had five mighty men to help him in his search for fame and fortune. The first was a woodcutter of such great strength that he could chop down a forest of trees with just one blow with an axe. The second was a hunter, a wonderful shot with a gun, and the third was a man who could blow with such mighty force that he could spin the sails of a faraway windmill.

2. The fourth man kept his ankles tied together with rope, for he was such a fast runner that he dare not have his legs free, and the fifth wore a hat pulled down over his right ear. If he uncovered his ear, it would send out a stream of air cold enough to freeze the whole world. Together, Michael and his companions went on their way and presently reached a splendid Royal palace.



3. Here, Michael soon learned that the King had promised his fair daughter in marriage to any man who could beat her in a race. So, going to the Court, Michael bowed low to the King. "Your Majesty," he said, "I have among my friends a man who will race against your daughter." "Very well, let him try," said the King.



4. A hundred of the fastest runners in the world had tried to beat her in a race, but so far none had succeeded. But this time Michael's companion had untied the rope from his ankles and when the signal was given for the race to start he took one stride forward and covered more than half the distance of the race.



5. He became so far ahead of the Princess that he decided to lie down and have a sleep. In fact, he went off into such a deep sleep that the Princess, running her hardest, went past him and looked like reaching the winning-post first. "Wake up! Wake up!" shouted Michael, but the sleeping man did not move. Then they all shouted together, but with no effect at all.



7. But there was no need to worry. The hunter was a mighty marksman, the finest in all the world, and the shot he fired from such a long way off hit a tuft of grass beneath the head of the sleeping man, waking him up in what was really a most gentle manner. "On your feet—and run quickly!" cried Michael.



6. "The foolish fellow—he has lost his chance," exclaimed Michael. "Not yet," said the hunter. "Allow me to rouse him." Putting the gun to his shoulder he took a very careful aim and fired. At this Michael looked a little alarmed. "What are you doing?" he gasped. "If you cause our friend any injury then he will lose the race for sure and we will all be put in prison."



8. The Princess thought she had won easily, for she had only one more step to go to the winning post. Then suddenly there was a sound like the rushing wind and the thin man went past her in the twinkling of an eye, raising his hat to her in a very cheeky manner. Michael and the other mighty men were delighted.

Michael and the Mighty Men



1. Michael and his five mighty men companions were feeling very pleased with themselves, because one of them—the fastest runner in all the world—had just beaten the King's daughter in a race. "Your Majesty promised that your daughter would marry the man who raced her to the winning post," Michael said. "Now is the time for you to keep to your word."

2. "Of course, my friends," smiled the King. "A noble King like myself always keeps a promise. Come with me and be my honoured guests. We will have a feast and some wine as we make all arrangements." He led the way to a heavy door in the hall of the castle and turned the key to open it. "After you, good gentlemen," he said. "Step inside and be comfortable."



3. But as Michael and his mighty men stepped into the room on the other side of the door, the King cunningly shut it, locking them in. "I have no intention of allowing my daughter to marry a worthless wanderer," he chuckled to himself. "We will see how they like being locked inside a steel-walled room."



4. Then the King called up his servants and they went into a cellar of the Palace below the room in which Michael and his friends were prisoners. "Build a fire—a great roaring fire that will make the steel walls red hot," he ordered. "When they call out for mercy I will make a bargain with them."



5 So the great roaring fire was made and more and more wood was piled upon it. So fierce was the heat that came up from below that the steel walls of the room became red-hot. It was becoming more than Michael could bear. "We must give in, my friends," he gasped. "It's plain that the King means us to release him from his promise to give his daughter away in marriage."



7 After a while, thinking that his prisoners had had enough, the King opened the door of the steel-lined room. You can imagine his surprise when he saw all six of them chatting to each other and seeming not the least bit bothered. "By my royal crown, I must deal with these mighty men in another way," gasped the King.



6 But the man who always wore his hat tilted over one ear was not in the least worried. "As I have told you all," he said, "I have only to lift my hat and a stream of freezing air will pour out of my right ear." As he said this, he laughingly raised his hat, and the others were amazed when an ice-cold gush of air came out of his ear to keep the inside of the room quite cool.



8 So, in place of his daughter, he offered them a sack of gold. Michael agreed to this and soon returned to the Palace with the strong man and a sack almost as big as a house. "You promised us a sack of gold, Your Majesty," said Michael to the startled King. "Now let us fill it with gold and we'll be on our way."

Michael and the Mighty Men



1. The King of a certain country had agreed to reward Michael and his Mighty Men with a sack of gold and when they arrived at the Palace with a sack as big as a house, he laughed at them. "Yes, you may fill it and take it, but only if you can carry it . . . that was the agreement we made," said the King.

2. "It would take the strength of a hundred men to lift all that weight of gold," he went on. "By being greedy and choosing such a large sack, you will get no gold at all." "We shall see, your Majesty," replied Michael. It took every piece of gold in the whole Kingdom to fill the sack and the King still smiled.



3. But Michael smiled, too. When the huge sack was full, he nodded to one of his mighty friends—the forester who could chop down a hundred giant trees with one blow of an axe. Easily, as though lifting a load of feathers, the forester hoisted the great sack on one shoulder and with a little help, walked away.



4. The King could hardly speak for rage. Before his very eyes, every bit of gold was being taken out of his Kingdom. "I shall be ruined," he said. "Call out the guard! No, more than that, call out the whole of my cavalry. Those cunning rogues must be caught and stopped. Deal with them and bring back the gold."

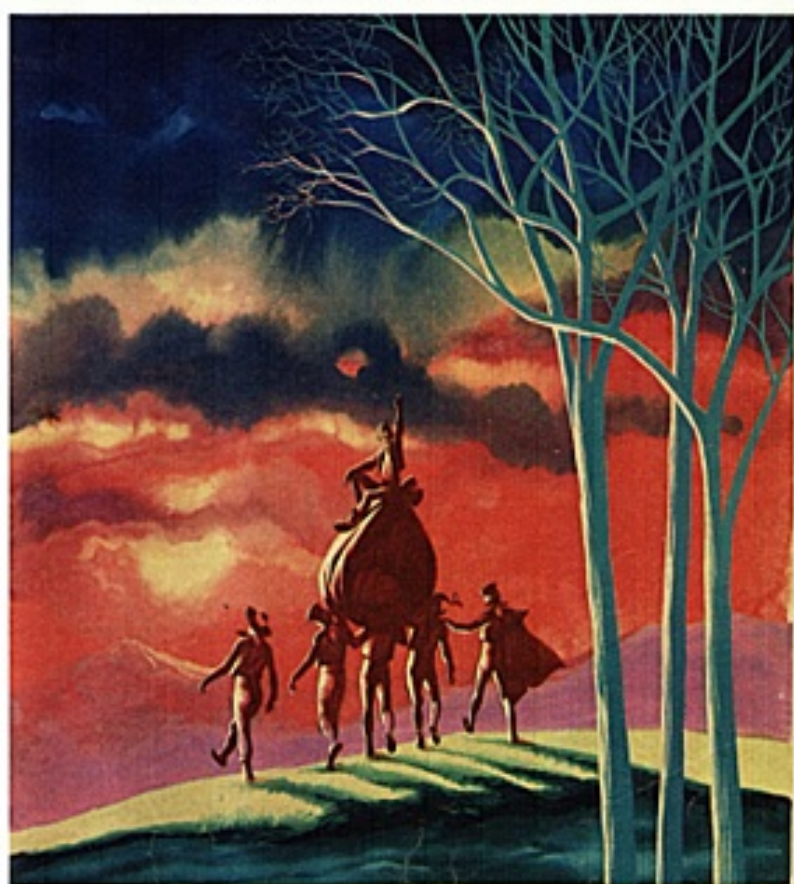


5. Michael and his Mighty Men were some distance from the King's castle when they saw horsemen coming after them in a cloud of dust. "It's a troop of the King's cavalry," reported the hunter, who had the keenest eye of them all. "What shall we do?" "Put down the sack and we will wait right here," Michael said.

6. The horsemen came nearer and nearer until they could see the glint of sun on their swords—but Michael did not seem in the least worried. "This is a job for you, my good friend," he said to the mighty man who could set windmills spinning. The soldiers were still quite a long way off when he blew on them.



7. It was only really the gentlest of breaths from the mighty man, but it was as though a sudden whirlwind had struck the oncoming soldiers. Horses and riders were picked up and thrown hither and thither in all directions. "You may stop blowing now, my friend," smiled Michael. "We'll not see them again."



8. That was the end of the chase and Michael and his Mighty Men continued their journey, with more riches than they could spend in a lifetime. Between them they were a band of men who could do any deeds they wished and Michael was glad that the five mighty men were now his happy, loyal friends for all time.

